

FAQs for the former VA Campus

High quality, inclusive, and equitable redevelopment of the former VA Campus is a top priority for the City and County of Denver. The site's size and strategic location adjacent to Rose Medical Center, the new mixed-use community at 9th and Colorado, and planned high capacity transit infrastructure on Colorado Boulevard create a unique opportunity to advance multiple long-term goals. Foremost among these is providing high quality, affordable housing within a short and safe walk or roll to healthcare, transit, groceries, parks, and quality jobs.

The [East Area Plan](#) was adopted by City Council on 11/16/20 after three years of community engagement that included 100+ events and over 10,000 participants who provided input in 6 languages. The plan articulates the community's vision and serves as a guide for city decision-making over the next 20 years. The former VA Campus is located within the East Area Plan boundaries and is subject to the applicable policies contained within the plan.

This FAQ document is intended to provide information to potential buyers of the former VA Campus by summarizing the city's regulations, processes, and priorities for the site.

1. What is the current zoning on the site?

The current zoning on the site is CMP-H (Hospital Campus) UO-3 (historic structure use overlay) See [section 9.2 of the Denver Zoning Code](#) for additional details.

2. What policies within the East Area Plan are applicable to the site?

The East Area plan articulates a comprehensive vision and strategies across multiple topics. These include, but are not limited to:

- a. Land Use: If the site is not reused as a hospital campus, a rezoning to a mixed-use zone district with a maximum height of 12 stories and provision of community benefits (Policy L3, H-L1)
- b. Urban Design: High quality design and compatibility with the Hale neighborhood. This includes pedestrian friendly street frontages, durable building materials, and comfortable and inviting streetscapes. (Policy L7)
- c. Affordable housing: New development should meet the needs of a range of households, including those earning very low, low, and moderate incomes. Units should be designed to accommodate a variety of living situations, including families, multi-generational living, aging in place, residents with disabilities, and residents needing supportive services. (Policy E3)
- d. Open space and stormwater management: Publicly accessible and usable open space with integrated stormwater management, including [green infrastructure practices within landscaping](#). It should be noted that the site is located within an identified [potential stormwater inundation area](#). (Policy Q3.E)
- e. Transportation and Mobility: Quality sidewalks, traffic calming infrastructure, and Transportation Demand Management strategies, such as parking maximums,

shared car services and allocated parking, private bike share programs, secure bike parking, car/bike share memberships for tenants, transit passes for tenants, ride hailing/taxi drop off parking or pull out, deliveries scheduled during non-rush hours, and additional on/off-site mobility infrastructure improvements. (Policy M9, M12)

- f. Historic Preservation: Landmark designation of historically significant buildings (Policy H-L2.D) (see Question 5 below)

Many of these requirements and processes will be coordinated through the city's Large Development Review (LDR) process (see Question 3 below)

3. What is Large Development Review (LDR)?

[Large Development Review](#) is a regulatory process where applicants are provided clear direction on how they are expected to meet priorities important to Denver's neighborhoods, including, for example, providing coordinated infrastructure improvements, publicly accessible open space, parkland, quality design, and affordable housing. During LDR, city staff will outline the regulatory or planning steps expected of new, large developments in order to stay consistent with the East Area Plan and applicable policies within other adopted plans, such as the Comprehensive Plan and Blueprint Denver.

In addition to LDR, redevelopment of the former VA campus will need a [Transportation Demand Management Plan \(TDR\)](#), and a [Site Development Plan](#). If the campus is no longer used as a hospital campus, the site will need to be [rezoned](#) in order to be consistent with the East Area Plan.

4. Why is affordable housing a top priority within the East area?

There is a strong consensus in Denver that neighborhoods should offer a range of housing options in support of a diverse community, where residents have an opportunity to live in their neighborhoods long-term.

In the East Area, approximately 4,763 households, or about 1/3 of all households, are considered cost-burdened and spending more than 30% of their gross income on housing. East is currently short approximately 1,400 units of housing for the area's lowest-income households and this number is expected to increase as rents continue to rise throughout the city. Renters who want to buy will have trouble finding a home until they earn more than \$50,000. Only about 800 of the 15,000 housing units in the East Area are guaranteed to be affordable to residents, meaning they have an income restriction in place.

In the western portion of the Hale neighborhood, where the former VA Campus is located, the issue of housing affordability is particularly acute. This area is one of only a handful within Denver identified as [especially vulnerable to involuntary displacement of existing residents](#).

5. What are the historic preservation considerations and how will they affect the redevelopment process?

- a. Demolition Review

All existing structures are subject to the demolition review process outlined in Chapter 30 of the DRMC if a Total Demolition or Certificate of Demolition Eligibility (CDE) application is submitted. Through this process, if the City finds

a structure eligible for historic designation per the designation criteria outlined in Chapter 30, the public will be notified and allowed the opportunity to weigh in on alternatives to demolition in collaboration with the property owner.

b. [Tax Incentives](#)

There are two primary financial incentives for the rehabilitation and reuse of existing buildings: 1) Colorado Historic Preservation Tax Credit and 2) Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credit. The State provides a 20-35% income tax credit for the rehabilitation of income-producing buildings that are historically designated and the Federal government provides a 20% credit. A building designated as a Denver Landmark is eligible for the state tax credit. A building designated to the National Register of Historic Places is eligible for both the state and federal tax credits. The Colorado State Historic Preservation Office has determined the Main Hospital building to be eligible for designation in the National Register of Historic Places. Preliminary review of the Main Hospital building by Denver Landmark Preservation shows it to also be eligible for local historic designation as a Denver Landmark.

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